

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Geomatics Staff Function
Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Lands—March 7, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think that this is the part of the budget where a whole bunch of people are being moved out to the Department of Finance for the ISSS. Is that correct? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister, could you please clarify?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that the mains have been restated to exclude that change.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Now, Mr. O'Reilly, would you like to rephrase the question, perhaps?

MR. O'REILLY: I am trying to understand the answer. So, in last year's business plan, is this where we would have found all of those wonderful GIS people who in this budget would have been moved out to the Department of Finance? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Hilderman.

MS. HILDERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our 2018-2019 Main Estimates had a fourth activity, which was the Informatics Shared Services Centre, so, with a major reorganization, restructure, then the mains are restated. That activity is no longer in Department of Lands' main estimates. It now appears within Department of Finance's. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, so now we have the "ministry of the evaporating function" within Lands. So, okay, Mr. Chair, where can I ask, then, about the indeterminate geomatics analyst position that the Minister spoke of in his opening remarks? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, that is within this activity. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Bingo. I think I've got it now. Why is the department hiring a geomatics analyst -- as I understand, these are computer people who do computerized mapping and all that kind of thing -- when it seems like all of those functions have been removed from the department and are now parked in Finance? Can someone explain to me why this person or why this position is being added to the Lands budget? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. A large body of work that forms the Department of Lands' core business is geomatics-related and involves mapping and surveying approvals to be appended to leases and related legal agreements and documents, so the geomatics

analyst will support self-government implementation by ensuring GIS data and land-tenure records to be transferred are current and reflect a high degree of accuracy. This position will aid in response to additional survey needs and requirements stemming from the transfer of lands, of land related to land resources, and self-government agreements. This work is often time sensitive, so presently Lands has one resource dedicated to this work in land administration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the explanation from the Minister. I am still trying to figure out why is this position not in the ISSS unit that is in Finance? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am told that the reason for this is that this is a person who is dedicated to this specific area of work, and, for that reason, that is why we need this position. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The Minister is starting to make my case for why I think ISSS is a bad move in the first place. Here's a department that is creating a new position so that they can get timely access to the kind of services that ISSS is supposed to be delivering. That sort of goes counter to the whole reason why this thing was being set up in the first place. I don't agree with it, and I think the people who were being moved out of Lands into the Department of Finance should stay with Lands. This just, I guess, confirms my belief that this is a bad thing to do, this ISSS, when we have a department here that is creating a new position because they want timely access to the kind of services that those guys are supposed to be providing. I don't know if the Minister has any remarks he would like to make in response to that, but I would be curious to hear what he would have to say. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you for the comments. This position is very specific to Lands, and we needed this person so that they could be easily accessible, if I could put it that way. I do understand the Member's concern about the overall direction of the centralization, but this is a position that we felt we very specifically needed for our own needs. I don't think I want to comment about the overall structure and the creation of the ISS department, or whatever it's called. Thank you.